

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJECT: DIET SESSION EXTENDED 65 DAYS JULY 24

REF: TOKYO 9410

SUMMARY: CURRENT DIET SESSION EXTENDED FOR 65 MORE DAYS BY LOWER HOUSE AT 0010 JULY 24. ONLY LDP MEMBERS PRESENT FOR VOICE VOTE WHICH BOYCOTTED BY ALL OPPOSITION MEMBERS. VOTE CAPPED FAST-BREAKING SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH BEGAN LATE AFTERNOON WHEN UPPER HOUSE SPEAKER KENZO KONO FAILED TO EFFECT COMPROMISE TO AVOID EXTENSION BY SECURING ACTION ON KEY BILLS STALLED IN UPPER HOUSE. CURRENT SESSION NOW EXTENDED TO SEPTEMBER 27. END SUMMARY.

1. UPPER HOUSE SPEAKER KENZO KONO MADE LAST-MINUTE EFFORT LATE MONDAY AFTERNOON TO EFFECT COMPROMISE TO TAKE ACTION ON KEY BILLS WITHOUT EXTENDING SESSION. KONO CALLED REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL PARTIES TO HIS DIET OFFICE AND REQUEST AGREEMENT ON FOLLOWING TERMS AS PRECONDITION FOR ADJOURNMENT ON SCHEDULE TUESDAY: (1) PASSAGE OF GOJ DRAFT OF TSUKUBA UNIVERSITY BILL WITHOUT REVISION; (2) PASSAGE OF RR BILL FOLLOWING REVISION, WHICH WOULD DEFER WAGE INCREASES NEGOTIATED BY JNR RR WORKERS THIS SPRING UNTIL END OF JFY NEXT MARCH 31; (3) CARRY OVER OF TWO DEFENSE BILL INTO NEXT SESSION, TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PASSED WITHIN FIRST 30 DAYS OF SESSION; AND (4) ADDITIONAL

COMMITTEE DEBATE AND REVISION OF HEALTH BILL. FOLLOWED BY
PASSAGE BEFORE ADJOURNMENT.

2. LDP EXECUTIVE BOARD THEN DECIDED THAT COMPROMISE COULD
ONLY BE ACCEPTED IF ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES GUARANTEED TO
CARRY OUT ITS TERMS. HOWEVER, COMPROMISE DIED ABORNING AS
JSP STATED CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO TWO DEFENSE BILLS AND JCP
AND KOMEITO INDICATED OPPOSITION TO EXTENSION OF SESSION.
ACCEPTANCE OF COMPROMISE BY DSP AND NI-IN CLUB INADEQUATE TO
HEAD OFF ENSUING RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF SHARP CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES.

3. LDP LEADERS, IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH PRIMIN TANAKA AND
SECRETARY GENERAL TOMISABURO HASHIMOTO, REQUESTED THAT LOWER HOUSE
STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CALL SESSION MONDAY NIGHT TO CONSIDER
LDP PROPOSAL FOR 130 DAY EXTENSION. OPPOSITION PARTIES
IMMEDIATELY AGREED TO TRY TO PREVENT VOTE ON EXTENSION BY ALL
MEANS, WITH EVEN DSP VOICING REGRET AT QTE LDP REJECTION OF
COMPROMISE UNQTE.

4. DURING EARLY
EVENING OPPOSITION MEMBERS GATHERED OUTSIDE
DIET OFFICE OF LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER SHIGESABURO MAEO TO
BLOCK ACCESS AND PHYSICALLY IMPEDE MOVEMENT BY LDP MEMBERS.
SCENE OF CONFUSED MELEE WHICH TOOK PLACE THERE INVOLVIN DIET
MEMBERS, STAFF AND POLICE WAS SHOWN ON MID-EVENING TV NEWS.
OPPOSITION MEMBERS WERE LATER SHOWN SEATED ON STAIRS TO
BLOCK PASSAGE.

5. MEANTIME, DESPITE INCREASING PRESSURE FROM PRIMIN
TANAKA, LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER SHIGESABURO MAEO EXPRESSED
RELUCTANCE TO CALL LOWER HOUSE SESSION TO VOTE ON 130 DAY
EXTENSION, CITING OWN PROMISE THAT CURRENT DIET SESSION WOULD
NOT BE EXTENDED UNILATERALLY A SECOND TIME. MAEO MADE
THIS PLEDGE IN PROCESS OF NORMALIZING DIET PROCEDURES WHEN HE
SELECTED TO SUCCEED FORMER SPEAKER UMEKICHI NAKAMURA IN
MAY (TOKYO 6634). ALTHOUGH KONO DECLINED TO LEND SUPPORT
REQUESTED BY MAEO IN SEEKING EXTENSION, LATER SUCCEEDED IN
SHORTENING LENGTH OF PROPOSED EXTENSION FROM 130 TO 65 DAYS ON
GROUNDS THAT SHORTER PERIOD ADEQUATE TO COMPLETE DELIBERATION OF
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KEY BILLS, WHICH ONLY BUSINESS REMAINING BEFORE BIET.

6. SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT LDP MEMBERS UNILATERALLY APPROVED
EXTENSION PROPOSAL IN LOWER HOUSE STEERING COMMITTEE. SPEAKER
MAEO WAS THEN CONVOYED INTO LOWER HOUSE THROUGH OPPOSITION
MEMBERS THRONGING CORRIDOR TO CONVENE SESSION ATTENDED ONLY BY
LDP MEMBERS, WHO APPROVED 65 DAY EXTENSION BY VOICE VOTE IN
LESS THAN MINUTE.

7. COMMENT: LDP, FRUSTRATED BY OPPOSITION STALLING TACTICS FOR 214 DAYS OF CURRENT SESSION--TACTICS WHICH SUCCEEDED LARGELY BECAUSE OF LDP INEPTITUDE, HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO EXTEND SESSION AGAIN ON LAST DAY BEFORE SCHEDULED EXPIRATION JULY 24. OTHERWISE ALL KEY BILLS, ON PASSAGE OF WHICH IT AND GOJ HAD STAKED CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE, WOULD HAVE DIED IN UPPER HOUSE. HOWEVER, TORN SUITS, RIPPED SHIRTS AND OTHER AFTERMATH OF MELEE MONDAY EVENING DO NOT AUGUR WELL FOR EARLY NORMALIZATION OF POST-EXTENSION DIET PROCEEDINGS. RECORD OF WHAT IS PROBABLY LEAST PRODUCTIVE DIET OF POST-WAR PERIOD BOUND TO INVITE FURTHER CRITICISM OF PRIMIN TANAKA - SEC GEN HASHIMOTO LEADERSHIP WITHIN LDP, AS WELL AS OUTSIDE. END COMMENT.
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